

Report

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	7 May 2019
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	South Lanarkshire Council – MCR Pathways Programme
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide an update on progress with 'MCR Pathways', a school based mentoring programme supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable young people to realise their full potential.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that current and planned work relating to the implementation of MCR Pathways, which is supported on a Council wide basis, be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. MCR Pathways is a school based mentoring and talent development programme specifically designed to provide personalised support for disadvantaged, vulnerable and/or care experienced young people, including young people on the fringes of the care system.
- 3.2. MCR Pathways carefully selects and recruits volunteers to provide high quality 1:1 mentoring support for identified learners across the period of at least a year. Mentors are trained in the skills required to nurture a strong and stable relationship with the young person with whom they have been matched.
- 3.3. In its first phase, the programme provided mentors for over 1,000 vulnerable learners across Glasgow City Council secondary schools. Having demonstrated successful outcomes for this group, MCR Pathways has been extended to a number of other Local Authorities, including South Lanarkshire Council.
- 3.4. In the 10 years that the programme has run in the pilot school in Glasgow City Council, post 16 return to school rates, sometimes described as staying on rates, for care experienced learners have increased from 4% to 60% and the percentage of care experienced learners progressing to further or higher education has increased from 19% to 78%.

4. MCR Programme and anticipated outcomes

- 4.1. The MCR Pathways programme is initially being offered to vulnerable learners in 6 secondary schools:-

- ◆ Hamilton Grammar
- ◆ St John Ogilvie High School, Hamilton
- ◆ Cathkin High School, Cambuslang
- ◆ Calderside Academy, Blantyre
- ◆ Stonelaw High School, Rutherglen
- ◆ Trinity High School, Rutherglen

- 4.2. An MCR Programme Coordinator, as referred to in paragraph 5.2, will be based in each school. Their role is to liaise with school staff to identify and work with young people who would benefit from the programme. They are also the first point of contact for mentors.
- 4.3. Programme Coordinators work with pupils from S1 and S2, involving them in group work and building their confidence. They also prepare the young people to be ready for a mentor when they reach S3 and S4, support mentor relationships, and encourage pupil engagement with Talent Tasters – short workplace visits - and other activities.
- 4.4. Mentors are recruited from the local community and the only requirement to become a mentor is a desire to help a young person and to put them first by building a positive relationship based on non-judgemental listening and by providing encouragement.
- 4.5. Learners who meet the criteria for the programme are identified in school and are matched with a Mentor by the Programme Coordinator, supported by the central MCR team. Learners are provided with the opportunity, space and time to meet with their mentor for a scheduled weekly session of 50 minutes.
- 4.6. As a result of ongoing mentoring, it is expected that learners benefiting from the programme will be supported to achieve improved educational outcomes. It is anticipated that participation in the programme will impact positively on the following areas:-
 - ◆ Post 16 return to school rates
 - ◆ Attainment
 - ◆ Motivation (Measured by MCR programme methodology)
 - ◆ Attendance and Engagement
 - ◆ Skills and Aspirations
 - ◆ Health and Wellbeing

These will be monitored as measures of success across the programme.

- 4.7. It is worth noting that feedback from Mentors and their employers, shows that it has had a positive impact on their own personal and professional skills and has proved to be deeply rewarding and personally beneficial.

5. Progress to date

- 5.1. South Lanarkshire Council MCR Pathways programme – which has been branded as the Young South Lanarkshire Talent (YSLT) programme - was officially launched by Lindsay Freeland, Chief Executive, at a well-attended event on 25 March 2019.
- 5.2. 5 of the 6 school-based Programme Coordinators have been recruited, are in post and have undertaken full-time training over a 6 week period. Recruitment is under way for the final post.

5.3. Ongoing support is provided by the MCR Pathways' national start-up team and this will continue for the initial 6 months of the programme. After that, a team of 3 dedicated MCR Pathways managers will continue to provide support, training and advice.

5.4. School and local authority based staff have been identified to liaise with the MCR Pathways Managers and YSLT Programme Coordinators:-

Depute Head Teacher (1 per school)

Project Manager (Education Resources - Lead Officer DYW)

Inclusion Officer (Education Resources - Lead Officer Inclusion)

5.5 Recruitment of volunteer mentors is underway. Interested parties have been invited to attend drop-in information sessions:-

- ◆ Thursday 4 April - Rutherglen Town Hall
- ◆ Friday 5 April - The Town House Hamilton
- ◆ Monday 29 April - The Town House Hamilton
- ◆ Tuesday 30 April - Rutherglen Town Hall

Interested parties can still register online at:-

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SouthLanarkshireLaunch/>

It is expected that the mentors will be able to commit to a regular weekly meeting time, at the learner's school, on an ongoing basis, as stated in paragraph 4.5.

6. Employee Development

6.1. The Council recognises the benefit that mentoring can have on volunteers who support young people. Consequently, as a commitment to the programme, South Lanarkshire Council will encourage appointed volunteers to carry out mentoring meetings during their work time.

7. Next steps

7.1. MCR Pathways will provide access to a Young South Lanarkshire Talent programme 'hub' to provide support to all staff involved in the programme. The hub will provide a:-

- ◆ central location for core MCR Pathways and YSLT staff covering all key functions of Senior Management, Mentor Services, Volunteer Services, Talent Taster, IT and Digital specialist staff, Marketing and Communications staff etc.
- ◆ base for mentor recruitment and training, volunteer engagement and staff development
- ◆ base for mentor and SLC forums
- ◆ base to host key events within the planned annual calendar

7.2. Mentors will undertake training with a focus on relationship building, having already been 'matched' to a young person based on common interests and experiences. They will also be expected to attend Pathways and Advanced Toolkit training.

7.3. Learners are being identified using a well-established toolkit designed by MCR Pathways. Care Experienced learners and those with barriers to motivation, commitment and resilience will be given priority.

- 7.4. Learners and their matched Mentor will be introduced by the YSLT Coordinator starting in August. This will normally take place in the young person's school
- 7.5. As noted at the Education Resources Committee meeting on 19 June 2018, the intention was to extend the programme to the remaining secondary schools in a rolling programme. It is anticipated that the undernoted 3 Scottish Attainment Challenge schools will join the programme in session 2020/2021.

- ♦ Larkhall Academy
- ♦ Lanark Grammar
- ♦ Holy Cross High School, Hamilton

8. Monitoring

- 8.1. The Education Resources' staff will monitor the implementation, progress and performance of the programme.
- 8.2. Outcomes for young people, as noted in paragraph 4.5, will be monitored by YSLT Coordinators and the Lead Officer DYW as the programme progresses.
- 8.3. The views of the young people and their mentors will be included in any evaluation of the programme.
- 8.4. Education Resources will provide further reports on the progress of the MCR programme.

9. Employee Implications

- 9.1. As approved by Education Resources Committee in June 2018.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. As approved by Education Committee Resources in June 2018.

11. Other Implications

- 11.1. There are no significant risk implications in terms of the information contained within this report.
- 11.2. There are no implications for sustainability in terms of the information contained within this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 12.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to existing policy, function or strategy and therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 12.2. Consultation has been undertaken with all interested parties.

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

10 April 2019

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ♦ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning

Previous References

- ◆ Education Resources Committee – 19 June 2018

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-
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